



Supporting our Hospitals – COVID-19 National Medical Stockpile

The Australian Government is continuing support for the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) through an investment of \$3.3 billion.

The NMS is a crucial component of Australia’s critical health emergency infrastructure, and underpins Australia’s preparedness for public health emergencies such as COVID-19 and the 2019–20 bushfires.

Expiring antiviral, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear inventory items are being replenished, along with pharmaceuticals and personal protective equipment (PPE) – including face masks, respirators, gloves, face shields and gowns – and medical supplies and equipment.

The Government is working with local Australian suppliers to purchase sterile nasal swab kits for the NMS.

As of 30 September 2020, the NMS has purchased a total of:

- 166 million P2/N95 respirators
- 595 million surgical masks
- 12 million face shields
- 32 million goggles
- 53 million gowns
- 261 million gloves

As of 30 September 2020, disbursements from the NMS have included:

- 21 million P2/N95 respirators
- 56 million surgical masks
- 4 million face shields
- 900,000 goggles
- 6 million gowns
- 12 million gloves

Why is this important?

Australia's health security and national emergency response capability is critical. The NMS is a significant mitigation strategy against potential and actual threats to Australia's health security, including natural disasters and terrorist threats. Australia will always require a strategic national reserve of time critical and essential medical supplies. It is important to maintain stock levels and implement strategies to ensure continued national capability and onshore access to essential medical supplies.

In the event of a pandemic or other public health emergency, all Australians, especially vulnerable and at-risk groups and health care workers, need access to essential medical supplies, including medicines and PPE.

A key learning from the COVID-19 pandemic is the need to increase Australia's domestic production of critical supplies.

The Department of Health entered into new arrangements with a number of Australian manufacturers to build our onshore manufacturing capabilities and ensure sovereign supply. A proposed review of the NMS will look at the feasibility of additional onshore manufacturing and supply of specific products into future agreements.

This measure is informed by, and supports, the Government's Coronavirus National Health Plan, to ensure Australians have the support they need throughout this pandemic and that we remain prepared across the country.

Who will benefit?

All Australians, especially vulnerable and at risk groups such as the elderly, will have access to essential medical supplies, including medicines and PPE. Health practitioners and staff and aged care workers will also be protected from infection when caring for patients.

How much will this cost?

This will cost \$3.3 billion from 2019–20 to 2020–21.